

Rockland DA Candidate Ken Zebrowski Announce Initiatives to Combat Illegal Housing

Today, District Attorney Candidate Ken Zebrowski unveiled a sweeping platform to protect first responders and residents from dangerous housing violations and predatory landlords. The reforms build upon his work as an Assemblymember where he has led the fight for building safety, collaborating with the Firemen's Association of the State of New York (FASNY) and other public safety advocates.

"My office will root out corruption and threats to public safety wherever and whenever they occur," said Zebrowski.

Zebrowski's platform outlines an **overhaul to the process of building and fire code prosecution**, which is currently handled at the local level. Despite having jurisdiction over these violations the District Attorney's office has historically deputized local town and village officials for enforcement. Zebrowski's office will establish an oversight process that will review each local government's prosecution of local building code and fire violations to ensure that they are appropriately protecting the health and safety of residents and first responders. Municipalities that are inadequately enforcing the law and protecting public safety could have their authority revoked and enforcement handled by the District Attorney's office. Municipalities will also be provided with training and assistance to adequately handle the prosecution of these cases.

"As District Attorney, my job is to seek new and innovative ways to protect public safety. Building and fire code violations that jeopardize the safety of residents, first responders and neighborhoods, will no longer be ignored. My office will maximize the legal authority of our office to review the prosecution methods of all Rockland municipalities and ensure that the law is being followed."

Zebrowski will establish a formal process where local fire departments, emergency responders and police will be able to report dangerous conditions and collaborate in the review of the adequacy of prosecution.

Zebrowski also unveiled that he will be establishing a **Joint Tenant Harassment Task Force** to hold landlords that create dangerous living conditions accountable. The Joint Tenant Protection Task Force will be comprised of a coordinated operation of the District Attorney's office, local law enforcement, fire departments, building

departments and agencies throughout the County to investigate dangerous conditions. The Task Force will create a public complaint form for tenants and other entities to submit information against a property owner. The Task Force will share information amongst local, state and federal agencies to identify illegal behavior and refer for criminal and civil actions.

“We have seen illegal rooms in basements and attics without exits, faulty electrical connections, a lack of clean water, and generators in basements. Rent is often times collected in cash without a lease or any protections. These conditions are the result of landlord greed and a lack of coordinated enforcement. My office will partner with local, state and federal agencies to finally address these issues and protect tenants,” said Zebrowski.

The joint task force will reach into marginalized communities, who have been particularly at risk, to provide protection and assistance.

“No one should fear reporting these crimes. My office will protect and shield victims from retaliation of any kind,” concluded Zebrowski